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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTION, SOVEREIGNTY, FOREIGN RELATIONS; BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: Discussion on the Constitution, Iraqi Sovereignty, and Foreign Relations were the major editorial themes of the daily newspapers on September 26, 2005. END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES

[1A.](#) "Let Us Say Yes to Our New Constitution"
(Al-Taakhi, affiliated with the KDP led by Masoud Al-Barazani, published this page-five column by Hussein Al-Jaff)

"The new constitution is neither a typical document nor the best one in the world. In fact, it is a man-made item. However, it is the best constitution that was ever drafted in Iraq, by far--we know that it has not satisfied all Iraqis or the aspirations of every political party. But, at least, it has satiated many Iraqi demands and ambitions. In addition, we understand that constitutions can be changed according to conditions and needs. The constitution is a law for life that regulates the rights and duties of citizens.

"Most of the constitution's articles are similar to each other because many of them call for justice, equality, freedom and welfare for citizens. Without a doubt, there is a big plot attempting to thwart the new Iraqi constitution, which is the most important accomplishment for Iraqis since the downfall of the dictator. I believe that there are internal and external Arab and regional powers in our neighborhood that are scheming against us. These groups are supported and funded by Saddam's wife and daughter, who stole the Iraqi people's assets; they've allied themselves together to disrupt the constitutional process and reject the constitution.

"But, they won't succeed because honest Iraqis, who've suffered and struggled for the last 83 years, would never let that happen. According to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hoshiyar Zebari, two-thirds of the votes that are required to reject the constitution will only be achieved in Al-Anbar province. Hence, the progress of the constitution will move forward amid an exercise in democracy and freedom. This constitution will put an end to all crises facing the Iraqi people. I am sure that the people of Kurdistan, our people in the south of Iraq, and informed citizens in the western areas of Iraq will definitely say 'Yes' to the constitution. This sincere and affirmative word will become a covenant of honor that unites all Iraqis under the banner of the new Iraq."

[1B.](#) "Voting Yes During the Referendum Represents Freedom and Iraqi Willpower"
(Al-Ittihad, affiliated with the PUK led by Talabani, published this back-page editorial by Jamal Al-Hamundi)

"Since the establishment of the Iraqi state in 1921 none of the Iraq regimes, in either the royal or republican eras, considered democracy as a way to govern the country. Tribal dictatorship has exhausted the Iraqi people and led to a series of internal and external wars. The Iraqi opposition was unable to topple the dictator Saddam Hussein's regime due to numerous factors. However, the WTC bombings in September 2001 put the U.S., which is the bearer of freedom and democracy in the world, at the forefront of an enormous challenge against terrorism and for this reason, the U.S. had to wage war on terror.

"The deposed Iraqi regime, along with some countries in the Middle East, was responsible for fostering terrorists and encouraging terrorism; those countries have been an obstacle

in the fostering of democracy in the Middle East. In spite of all this terrorism, a National Assembly and a transitional Iraqi government were established with Jalal Talabani elected as the first Kurdish president of Iraq. Moreover, the new constitution was drafted through harmony amongst all Iraqis.

"This constitution will be put to Iraqis to vote on and to begin pursuing the right path toward establishing democracy in the new federal Iraq. In the federal territory of Kurdistan, political parties and movements that represent Kurds, Turkmen, Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Yazidis, gathered on September 22nd to prepare for ensuring a successful referendum throughout Kurdistan. This success will be achieved by saying yes to the Iraqi new constitution. Our Shiite and Sunni brothers in Iraq will also say yes to the constitution."

C. "A Late Saudi Awakening"
(As-Siyada, affiliated with Iraqi Republican Gathering led by Sa'ad Assem Al-Janabi, published this back-page editorial by Abdul Karim Mahmud)

"The Saudi Foreign Minister's criticism of U.S. policy in Iraq confirms the ugliness and hypocrisy of the crime that was committed by our Arab brothers against Iraq. Saudis, like many others in the Arab world are witnessing Iranian interference in Iraq and we know that the knives that have slaughtered Iraqis in the past are being used again to slaughter Arabs one by one. Saud Al-Faisal felt obliged to make such statements when he found that the U.S. failed to heed its friend's advice.

"Did the Saudis believe that the goal of the occupation of Iraq was to rid Iraq of the alleged weapons of mass destruction and establish democracy in Iraq? Actually, the Saudis are the first ones who let the Americans use their land to invade Iraq resulting in the American death machine killing hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis. Those statements by the Saudi foreign minister were far too late. However, they represent a loud warning against the danger of the disgraceful Iranian infiltration of Iraq--the Iranians interfere in Iraq's issues under the watch of the Americans.

"Saud Al-Faisal's statement confirmed this [Iranian infiltration] when he said that the Iranians operate in areas that are under American control and that they fund people and appoint officials. He added that they have also infiltrated police units and equip militias with weapons. For this reason, Saudi Arabia and all Arabs must apologize to the Iraqi people for every crime they committed against us. They must take a unanimous stance that leads to the end of the American occupation and terminates Iranian interference in Iraqi affairs. This Iranian intervention hinders the achievement of national unity and it is also the main instigator of sectarian sedition that will fracture Iraq's national unity and lead neighboring countries into wars and conflicts that may consume everything."

D. "The Constitution Will Defeat Terrorism"
(Al-Adala, affiliated with SCIRI led by Abdul Aziz Al-Hakim, published this page-three column by Dr. Ali Khalif)

"After the recent decline of sharp statements condemning the constitution, before the majority of Iraqis even read it and before its distribution through pamphlets, the majority of people have realized that the new Iraqi constitution represents a real birth. They also understand that a vote against it will take Iraq backward and this will give terrorists the chance to perpetrate more killings. Terrorism has failed to abort the constitutional and political process and we must increase security procedures in order to create a more secure environment to enable our people to vote in the upcoming referendum.

"We know that the most complicated stage in post-war Iraq has been the constitutional process due to the demands and different perspectives that were at play--viewpoints that nearly demolished the whole process. Some of the [opposition] parties participated in constitutional discussions despite their preconceived stances against the draft document. As a result, we have to work hard in order to make the constitutional process successful, to be faithful to the martyrs, our principles, and to all of the Iraqis who have struggled for the sake of freedom and justice.

"Some small groups are demanding that the Iraqi people reject the constitution. Actually, they have the right to express their opinions in our democratic society and we respect that but we want assurances that the Iraqi people know the right path and have recognized their interests. Our people have gotten fed up with the voices that allegedly represent the Iraqi people's interest and at the same time have failed to take a real stance against terrorist attacks and killings. I am sure that in a few days the ballot boxes will be filled with the word 'Yes' because this word will

carry the Iraqi people forward."

KHALILZAD